



Commerce  
Subcabinet  
Guidance Collaboration Action

August 4, 2020  
Via Google Meet  
1:00pm – 3:00pm

**Attendees:**

**Cabinet Members:**

Kelly Schulz, Secretary, Department of Commerce, Chair  
Ken Holt, Secretary, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD)  
Jimmy Rhee, Special Secretary, Governor's Office of Small Minority and Women Business Affairs (GOSBA)  
Tiffany Robinson, Secretary, Department of Labor  
Ben Grumbles, Secretary, Department of Environment (MDE)  
Sean Powell, Deputy Secretary for Greg Slater, Secretary, Department of Transportation (MDOT)  
Robert McCord, Secretary, Department of Planning (MDP)  
Jim Fielder, Secretary, Maryland Higher Education Commission (MHEC)  
Michael Higgs, Director of Assessments & Taxation (SDAT)  
Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Secretary, Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) (tentative)  
Joe Bartenfelder, Secretary, Department of Agriculture (MDA)  
Wendi Peters, Special Secretary, Smart Growth

**Guests:**

Meredith Wimbrow, Office of the Governor  
Ryan Snow, Governor's Office of Interagency Affairs (GOIA)  
Gretchen Hardman, GOIA  
Deputy Secretary Horacio Tablada MDE  
Deputy Secretary Julie Oberg, MDA  
Allison Cordell, Governor's Office of Performance Improvement (GOPI)  
Kenrick Gordon, Governor's Office of Rural Broadband  
Bridget O'Toole, Intern, Office of Senator Katie Fry Hester  
Kory Boone, SDAT  
Mike Pantelides, Labor  
Ann Gunning, Labor  
Victor Clark, Labor  
Janice Walker-Emeogo, Labor  
Todd Scott, DHCD  
Joe Griffiths, MDP  
Roger Campos, DHCD

**Commerce Staff:**

Julie Woepke  
Kyle McColgan  
Jayson Knott  
Sarah Sheppard  
Brigitte Peters  
Andrew Sargent  
Wade Hearle  
Allyson Redpath

Elizabeth Carven  
Michael Siers  
Rhonda Ray  
Tom Riford  
Signe Pringle

## **I. Call to Order**

Secretary Schulz called the meeting to order at 1:04pm.

## **II. Chair Update**

Secretary Schulz provided an update on early COVID-19 impacts to the State's economy. She reviewed the statewide and regional unemployment rates, consumer spending levels, and revenue from leisure and hospitality and small business slowing rebounding. Secretary Schulz briefly reviewed the status of COVID-19 relief loans and grants. She then described several new print ads to attract businesses and workforce, and the launching of the Innovation Uncovered Initiative. The Initiative will recognize and cultivate innovative businesses. She announced and encouraged nominations of businesses through the website. Secretary Schulz then described new tourism ads, and the #MasksOnMaryland campaign, which includes public service announcements by notable Marylanders and encourages social media sharing of images of masks on statues and individuals that will be tagged to the campaign. She concluded by describing a partnership with Hub Labels in printing window clings that businesses could display that feature the Maryland flag and the words "Proud to be Safely Open."

Secretary Schulz introduced Jayson Knott, Senior Director, to provide an update on the three (3) recent wins and referenced pending announcements, new project opportunities and ongoing opportunities. (All presentations on file.)

## **III. Review and approval of June 24, 2020 Minutes**

Upon a motion duly made and seconded, the minutes of the June 24, 2020 meeting were approved.

## **IV. Department of Labor Update**

Secretary Tiffany Robinson provided an update on unemployment benefits and stated that since the beginning of the pandemic, the Department has paid out over \$5.2 million in benefits. She referenced the pending extension of Federal stimulus benefits. Secretary Robinson then described the massive criminal fraud scheme uncovered by the Department, the U.S. Attorney's Office and other State and Federal partners, which involved 47,500 fraudulent unemployment insurance claims in Maryland totaling over \$501 million. She stated the uncovering of the scheme assisted those requesting immediate benefit payments to understand the importance of scrutiny of review. Secretary Robinson then described the Work Share Unemployment Insurance Program by listing the benefits to both the employer and employee and providing details of the program requirements. She concluded by providing a list of additional resources. (Presentation on file.)

## **V. Office of Rural Broadband Update**

Executive Director Kenrick "Rick" Gordon provided an update of the State's broadband funding, pilot projects and program results. He reviewed details of the Broadband Pilot Program; the Broadband Network Infrastructure Program; the Broadband Education Access Emergency Assistance Program; and the FY21 Broadband Assistance for unserved students that will provide grant funding to School Districts

to provide broadband to their unserved students for the 2020-21 academic year. He then reviewed a map of the statewide wireless education network and the deployment of equipment on State Towers and Water Towers. He then reviewed the statewide wireless education network and the FY21 Broadband Program. He concluded by announcing the recent \$13 million grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to a partnership of the City of Easton and Easton Utilities that in three (3) years will enable access to 90% of homes in that area.

Mr. Gordon took questions from the Secretaries related to deployment and effectiveness of small cell and 5G wireless technology in rural areas and minority procurement related to broadband contracting opportunities. Secretary Holt commended Mr. Gordon on the success of the Office and programs.

## **VI. Subcabinet Workgroups**

The Leaders of the five (5) Workgroups gave presentations: Customer Service, Job Creators, Workforce Development, Small Business, Regional Resources and SM3. The Regional Resources Region Leaders provided Updates and Opportunities Reports, Action Plans and Narratives as applicable. (All presentations and reports are on file.)

Secretaries Grumbles and McCord thanked and commended the Regional Teams on their collaborations, priorities and passion to make the teams work. Secretaries Bartenfelder and Grumbles commented on the SM3 Workgroup and the potential for new solutions, industries, and opportunities related to sustainable materials management. It was referenced a U.S. Economic Development Administration Grant was jointly being prepared for a project by DNR and Commerce related to SM3.

## **VII. Good of the Order**

Secretary Schulz announced that there is no new updates to report on Opportunity Zone projects this month. DHCD has signed a contract for a new contractor for the Opportunity Zone Exchange that will be launching in the next few months. She also provided a clarification to a slide in her presentation regarding Maryland Small Business Development Financing Authority (MSDBFA) Program. She clarified that the program is not only for minorities, rather small businesses.

Director Higgs reported that the State currently has 283,000 businesses in good standing and attributed it to the new electronic filing system. Secretary Grumbles announced Maryland ranked #1 in decoupling emissions from economic growth by the World Resources Institute. Secretary McCord announced that the Census filing deadline moved up to September 30, 2020. Maryland ranks #13 in filing the Census forms. Special Secretary Rhee reminded the Subcabinet of the procurement pipeline and reported 36 Agencies had filed their annual reports. He also stated that he is Co-Chair of the Maryland Charity Campaign, which will be conducted all on-line this year and reminded attendees of the importance of giving during this time.

## **VIII. Adjournment**

There being no further discussion and upon motion duly made and seconded, the meeting was adjourned at 2:48pm.